

South Western Region Consideration of 8 Planning Factors March 2010



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EIGHT METROPOLITAN PLANNING FACTORS

Section 3005 of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) requires metropolitan transportation planning organizations to consider eight factors in developing transportation plans and programs¹:

1. Support the **economic vitality** of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
2. Increase the **safety** of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
3. Increase the **security** of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users;
4. Increase the **accessibility** and mobility of people and for freight;
5. Protect and enhance the **environment**, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
6. Enhance the **integration** and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes for people and freight;
7. Promote efficient system **management and operation**; and
8. Emphasize the **preservation** of the existing transportation system.

The sections below describe how SWRPA addresses each of the eight planning factors in the conduct of its transportation planning program.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency

The South Western Region is widely recognized as Connecticut's economic engine, and its transportation network demands a planning program devoted to supporting and increasing economic vitality. SWRPA has seamlessly integrated economic development into its planning and programming activities at all levels, including regional planning as reflected in the [South Western Region Long Range Transportation Plan 2007-2035](#) (Plan), corridor planning as reflected in special studies, and as stakeholders in many projects of regional significance.

A key objective of the Plan is to maintain a healthy regional economy that balances housing availability, transportation capacity, and the locations of new jobs and employment centers to avoid creating or exacerbating housing shortages, congestion, and disorganized development patterns. The Plan was developed to be responsive to business needs and the State's urban development strategies, and provides the framework to guide investments in transportation to attain economic goals. The Plan recognizes the need to integrate land use planning with transportation, infrastructure and critical facilities, and energy planning to ensure that our communities remain vibrant and sustainable for the future.

In keeping with its stated objectives, the Plan describes the transportation infrastructure that requires potential expansion or construction if the region wishes to support the growth it strives to achieve. As a result, SWRPA has worked closely with its member municipalities to address anticipated economic activity on studies such as the *Stamford LRT Feasibility Study* (2009), which views light rail as a transit option which can provide improved circulation, mobility and access within the downtown office and retail

¹ 23 CFR 450.306

core and be a catalyst for new economic development. The *Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan* (2010) is focusing on passenger and vehicle circulation and capacity issues to support the growth of rail and bus riders utilizing the station, and SWRPA has provided direct input to the consulting team. Phase 1 of the Stamford Urban Transitway has been completed, and with the construction of Phase 2 will provide a direct link south of the railroad tracks to the Stamford Transportation Center area from Elm Street, to improve traffic operations, safety, efficiency, and encourage public transportation and non-motorized modes of transportation to address current and future traffic needs. The Stamford Urban Transitway has required coordination with SWPRA to ultimately be included in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Corridor studies sponsored by SWRPA were all undertaken with economic development as an underlying consideration. The [*Greenwich/Norwalk Bus Rapid Transit Study*](#) investigated the feasibility of introducing a new transit service along the Route 1 corridor, and recommended an enhanced bus service between Stamford and Norwalk that can spur transit oriented development along the proposed route in development nodes that are in their infancy. The [*Darien Route 1 Study*](#) and the [*Greenwich/Stamford Route 1 Study*](#) incorporate mixed-use development strategies into their respective scopes of work, while the Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study devoted significant resources on assessing the various markets and determining which sectors of the economy are leaking to other locales and corridors. The [*Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study*](#) also was conceived with Transit Oriented Development as a core task, as rail stations along the Danbury Branch such the station in Wilton have development potential and the Georgetown Land Development Corporation's proposed development is along the rail line.

SWRPA has been a champion for Transit Oriented Development in the South Western Region, and has worked with its member municipalities to pursue State of Connecticut Grants for the planning and implementation of Transit Oriented Development. Staff has coordinated closely with the city of Stamford and developers for the Harbor Point mixed-use development to secure funding and provide transportation improvements at what is currently one of the nation's largest redevelopment projects and will bring 4,000 new residences, 400,000 square feet of retail and 800,000 square feet of commercial office space to a waterfront district that is within walking distance of the Stamford Transportation Center. SWRPA has also strongly supported TOD in Norwalk, having supported the *South Norwalk Rail Station Intermodal Study* (2009) and Norwalk Redevelopment Agency's *Urban Connectivity Master Plan* (2010) to provide linkage between various mixed-use developments incoming along the Main Avenue Corridor between South Norwalk and the Wall Street vicinity.

SWRPA has also played an integral role in the regional efforts to create a *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (CEDS) (2009) for the Bridgeport/Stamford region as part of the One Coast One Future Initiative. The CEDS is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies SWRPA maintains a seat at the table of the CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee, and the strategy's completion will provide the foundation for the region to be eligible for a series of federal grants.

The FTA's Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute Program has driven the broader Bridgeport/Stamford Urbanized Area's efforts undertaken by the People to Jobs Regional Task Force, which been instrumental in the development of a Jobs Access program and created the framework for providing transportation to jobs for persons coming off welfare and other low-income people. This project has been underway for many years and has far surpassed the passenger goals set at the initiation of the project. People to Jobs enables businesses to access available entry-level workers, helping the businesses to remain viable.

2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users

A cornerstone of virtually all SWRPA activities, safety is a critical issue for the South Western Region's transportation system, and is a driving force behind virtually all projects that SWRPA initiates and participates in, including bicycle and pedestrian, freight, corridor, incident and emergency planning, and transportation technical services studies. Safety planning activities include reviewing safety data, goals, objectives and strategies to promote safety. Staff provides support to the South Western Region DEMHS 1 Incident Management Team and the Statewide Incident Management Task Force, including technical assistance; meeting, project and activity participation and coordination; inter-agency coordination; after action reviews and other activities.

The Plan recognizes many facets of highway safety, including bicycle, pedestrian, older driver, driving under the influence of alcohol, and truck safety. SWRPA has assisted Connecticut DOT in the development of *Connecticut's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (2007)*, the goal of which is to "see a continual decline of combined serious crashes and fatalities." SWRPA has provided technical assistance in efforts associated with design and implementation important highway safety upgrades, including I-95 Exit 15 – 14 speed change lanes in Darien, and the interchange of Route 7 and the Merritt Parkway in Norwalk.

The South Western Region has been a leader in incident management activities through its creation of the South Western Region Incident Management Team. The team includes agencies and organizations involved in responding to incidents on the regional transportation system. Regular meetings and training exercises of the South Western Region Incident Management Team improve coordination between response agencies, thereby improving the safety of the transportation system for the traveling public.

Corridor Studies currently being performed by SWRPA, including the *Greenwich/Stamford Route 1 Study*, the *Darien Route 1 Study* and the *Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study*, each concentrate on improving the safety along these busy stretches of key arterials within the South Western Region. The *Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study* has already identified in its existing conditions report some significant roadway safety deficiencies along the Corridor resulting from sharp curves, steep grades and poor sightlines that will shape the future recommendations currently under development.

Safe Routes to Schools is an increasingly important element of the region's non-motorized transportation system. Safe Routes plans have been developed for a number of primary schools in Greenwich, Norwalk, and Stamford. In 2006, Norwalk and Stamford were each awarded grant funds from ConnDOT's Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program to make improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of schools, resulting in a *Safe Routes to School Plan* for the Roton Middle School in Norwalk addressing parent concerns about student safety around the school, including the lack of sidewalks, narrow streets and speeding vehicles in the neighborhood. The plan recommends numerous improvements, including striping or relocating crosswalks, additional signage to enhance the visibility of pedestrians and a crossing guard to help direct traffic during the busy school opening and dismissal periods. Roton Middle School and the City of Norwalk will begin implementing the plan during the 2009-2010 school year. These improvements will encourage more students to walk or bike to school by improving the safety and quality of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Building on the success of Safe Routes to Schools, the *South Western Region Bike/Pedestrian Plan* has been initiated, with its objective being identification of policies and activities that increase the use, safety, and convenience of bicycling and walking in Connecticut's South Western Region and to promote

bicycling. The study has generated technical memoranda that include identification of Safety Corridors, which are segments of state highways with higher concentrations of bicycle- and pedestrian-involved traffic accidents. Based on the accident data, safety countermeasures are proposed at many locations.

SWRPA has provided leadership in strengthening safety of its transit network. The *Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan* (2010), which had been long advocated for as part of the Plan, has been initiated, with SWRPA Staff participating on the technical committee and meeting separately with the consulting team to concentrate on critical safety matters faced by users of the facility on a daily basis. The *Westport/Greens Farms Rail Parking Study* is included in the [Unified Planning Work Program](#) (UPWP) and includes improving multimodal circulation and safety as an objective.

With an aging population that struggles with the determination of the appropriate time to discontinue driving due to higher incidence of accidents, SWRPA's human services transportation planning has devoted much energy to providing planning assistance and coordination with entities that provide transit options for seniors and persons with disabilities. In 2006, SWRPA produced the Stamford Senior Transportation Technical Memo, which assessed opportunities to improve ridership on municipal services funded through the Connecticut Municipal Dial-a-Ride Grant Program. The [Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan](#) (LOCHSTP) process, in determining viable projects eligible for funding through the FTA's Section 5317 New Freedom Initiative, resulted in the creation of a mobility ombudsman who will centralize a variety of functions such as fielding questions and disseminating information that will empower seniors and persons with disabilities to use transit safely and confidently.

With the development of SWRPA's geographic information system (GIS), the Agency's ability to perform complex analyses has increased dramatically. With census data and the Connecticut Department of Transportation Congestion Screening and Monitoring Report providing regular opportunities to analyze data and produce mapping that displays safety information, SWRPA is well equipped to enhance its analytical capabilities of the South Western Region's transportation network's safety.

3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users

SWRPA recognizes that the transportation system must be secure in order for it to be effectively used both as a resource for emergency responders reacting to situations and for residents forced to evacuate their residences and businesses due to natural or criminal threats. Strong efforts have been made to address the expanded security emphasis required by SAFETEA-LU, and have been incorporated into our planning activities. SWRPA will continue to evaluate the security of highway and transit systems, current and developing plans, programs and processes to promote security.

Various projects with security components have been undertaken by SWRPA in recent years. With security included as one of eight key planning factors assessed in the [South Western Region ITS Strategic Plan](#), a strong coalition of groups providing security and emergency management services served on Technical Advisory Committee and helped craft recommendations intended to provide security benefits or grant opportunities. FTA Section 5307 and related Enhancement funds have been used to provide various amenities at transit stations throughout the region that have created safer environments for passengers through lighting, sheltering, bike storage and other upgrades.

With creation of stronger and broader-based emergency management and homeland security programs since 9/11, many of the region's first responders who are part of the South Western Region Incident Management Team also participate in regional emergency planning. This reinforces the relationships,

planning, training and exercises that were solely promoted by the South Western Incident Management Team between 1991 and 2004. In 2005, SWRPA joined regional emergency planning efforts in developing the region's evacuation plan coordinated by the CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS). In 2007, DEMHS formed the Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC). SWRPA and other transportation planning agencies and transit operators are members of the REPC, as well as the Transportation Committee (RESF-1) in which SWRPA serves as a Committee Chair. SWRPA also participates in activities such as SWOT analyses, resource typing, plan updates, exercises, and other tasks. The SWRMPO has regularly included DEMHS matters in their non-MPO agenda, and has worked to develop strong applications resulting in a series of federal grants.

4. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.

The South Western Region is fortunate to have an extensive transportation network that includes rail, bus transit (including paratransit service), and highway and water transportation systems. With a long history of promoting transit services and conducting studies have to determine the level and type of services required, SWRPA has been tireless in its efforts to increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.

SWRPA's objective is to provide transportation for the traditionally transit-dependent (young, elderly, disabled, low income) as well as options that provide commuters with viable mode choices such as transit, walking, bicycling, ferry, and ridesharing. The Plan promotes choice, alternative modes and demand management, and identifies transportation needs, strategies, and supports the use of new technology and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is supported to promote efficient systems, reliability, operations and management, and to increase information to users enhance their ability to make smart travel choices and make the transit system more user-friendly and appealing to occasional users and those looking to reduce their auto dependency.

Studies have been conducted to address all aspects of the transportation network. The *Greenwich/Norwalk Bus Rapid Transit Study* directly addressed accessibility and mobility through its investigation of the feasibility of developing a new service along Route 1. With a recommendation to create an enhanced bus service in the Stamford to Norwalk portion of the corridor, overcrowding issues on existing local routes are poised to be addressed and incoming developments along the corridor would have a higher-level transit option to complement local routes. Such a service would also serve incoming transit oriented developments in Norwalk with an on-board experience featuring improved amenities that are likely to attract new riders to the bus network. The *Coastal Corridor Bus Study*, administered by Norwalk Transit District with project management provided by SWRPA, will assess governance and service delivery of all bus routes along Route 1 between the New York State Line and Madison, CT, with an emphasis on transfers to and from the existing Coastal Link Service jointly operated by Norwalk Transit District, Greater Bridgeport Transit and Milford Transit District.

In 2009, SWRPA completed its [South Western Region Rail Parking Study](#) (2009), which examined various aspects of rail station parking, including inventory and usage, capacity and information availability. The study provides a series of recommendations offering options to maximize and increase capacity and approaches to streamline permitting processes and reduce confusion for occasional users. To build on the momentum created with this study, the upcoming *Westport/Greens Farms Rail Parking Study* will further evaluate opportunities to improve capacity at stations within Westport.

Corridor studies taking place along Route 1 in Darien, and Greenwich/Stamford Route 1 were initiated to improve mobility along these critical corridors that suffer from congestion and circulation matters that directly affect accessibility and mobility. These studies are expected to recommend various accessibility improvements and multimodal enhancements to promote improved mobility. *The Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study* is investigating the need to expand the existing 2-lane right of way present along parts of the study area, along with opportunities to introduce or expand transit services in a lower-density environment that suffers from poor train service provided by the Danbury Branch. Each of these studies will also feature a bicycle/pedestrian component to promote non-motorized forms of transportation.

SWRPA's role in project development facilitates mobility through its process to develop its Transportation Improvement Program and selection of projects funded through programs such as STP Urban, CMAQ, and FTA Enhancement. SWRPA also provides leadership when state programs provide opportunities, as it did when the Governor's Bus Service Initiative required timely prioritization of initiatives proposed by the broader urbanized area's transit operators to expand bus service.

SWRPA staff members are active participants on the many studies and projects in the region that have the ability to improve or add mobility, including:

- *New Canaan/Waterbury Branch Line Study*
- *Danbury Branch Study*
- *Stamford LRT Feasibility Study*
- *Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan*
- *South Norwalk Rail Station Intermodal Study*
- Stamford Urban Transitway – Phases 1 and 2
- CTDOT Rail Parking Task Force
- CT Metro North Commuter Rail Council

Within the Bridgeport/Stamford Urbanized Area, SWRPA took the lead in the development of a *Locally Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan* (LOCHSTP) in 2007, and a 2009 update. The LOCHSTP comprised of the following programs:

- FTA Section 5310, which provides grant funding for the purchase of vehicles to private nonprofit corporations and associations or public bodies for the purpose of transporting elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Under ConnDOT's management plan for the program, the federal grant provides 80% of the cost of the vehicle (up to \$40,000) with the remainder supplied by the entity receiving the vehicle grant. Since 2005, organizations participating in the program have been awarded 15 vehicles that enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- FTA Section 5316 – Job Access, Reverse Commute, which provides funding for services benefitting lower income individuals' ability to access their places of employment. . The Workplace, Inc. took the lead in the Bridgeport/Stamford Urbanized Area's People to Jobs collaborative, and has developed a program of services specific to the urbanized area's needs and resources, resulting in the expansion of service hours along many bus routes into nights and weekends and more frequent service during other busier periods.
- FTA Section 5317 – New Freedom Initiative, which provide new public transportation services and public transportation alternatives for people with disabilities that go beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This funding program has resulted in the creation of a joint service sponsored by multiple municipalities to provide rides to the VA Hospital in New Haven. A mobility ombudsman position has received approval from FTA and the State of Connecticut, and is now in the development stages. Once staffed, the ombudsman will have

various responsibilities revolving around increasing mobility among persons with disabilities by addressing barriers to mobility that are both physical and informational.

While not officially part of the LOCHSTP process, the State of Connecticut has provided funding since 2006 through a Municipal Dial-a-Ride Grant Program. SWRPA administers the program on a local level and provides technical assistance, and the program has doled out in the range of \$350,000 - \$375,000 annually, with the towns providing a plethora of new services and expanded hours of dial-a-ride services.

During 2009, SWRPA completed work on a regional Freight Overview, with an objective to identify key elements of the freight transportation system in South Western Connecticut, describe the movement of goods through Region, and to recognize the safe, efficient, and economical movement of goods as an integral component of the Region's multimodal transportation system. SWRPA has developed the Regional Freight Profile, which presents an overview of key freight transportation infrastructure and an analysis of freight and economic data.

Safe and connected pedestrian and bicycle facilities are essential elements of the comprehensive multi-modal transportation system envisioned for the South Western Region. These modes provide personal transportation choices that are alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. They are environmentally-friendly and benefit air quality and reduce energy use and traffic congestion. They can be relatively low cost, and contribute to a better quality of life. The challenge is to develop a 'bicycle and pedestrian friendly' region and state. SWRPA promotes bicycling and walking in the region through a number of initiatives. A *Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, currently under development, will identify projects to make bicycling and walking safer and more convenient. SWRPA also assists its member municipalities obtain funding for Safe Routes to School and Federal Transit Administration Enhancement projects, and has completed a Safe Routes to School project in Norwalk.

5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.

A central tenor of the Plan is Environmental and Clean Air Responsibility – to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any negative environmental impacts of transportation projects and systems whenever possible. The region seeks initiatives to improve air quality to bring the region into compliance with the clean air standards and develop a more healthy and high quality of life for all residents. The Plan identifies and implements measures to improve air quality, including promotion of alternative fuels and energy efficient transportation modes, increased public transit opportunities, transportation demand management and transportation systems management, and development of bicycle and pedestrian plans. In its promotion of transit oriented development, the Plan furthers policies that contribute to regional congestion mitigation, encourage sustainable travel options and promote environmental benefits.

In order to more fully consider the environment as it relates to transportation planning, SWRPA will consult with representatives of appropriate Federal and State agencies to review their inventories of historic, natural, and cultural resources as well as related efforts. These consultations should help elevate environmental conservation and mitigation, land use, and historic preservation as important considerations in SWRPA's transportation planning program. Implementation of transit options and commuter choices will have positive impacts on the environment by reducing energy consumption and auto emissions.

SWRPA has continued the momentum gained from the *CMS Vision 2020* report, and continues to conduct an innovative travel time data collection project as part of its Congestion Mitigation Program. The objective is to obtain quantitative data identifying and measuring congestion along major roadways and in the South Western Region. Staff used GPS equipped probe vehicles to gather data on travel speeds and times during rush hour. In coordination with the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency, travel time data was collected on I-95 and CT 15 between Stratford and Greenwich and Route 7 between Danbury and Norwalk.

The South Western Region has taken on a variety of transit initiatives intended to curb growth of vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions through efforts to reduce dependency on automobiles. The *Greenwich/Norwalk Bus Rapid Transit Study* was a conscious effort to create a new service that would attract “choice riders” to the bus network in addition to those considered transit dependent, and its anticipated routing near incoming transit oriented development is proposed with the hope that new residents would be attracted to an existing transit option rather than acclimating to a new locale without such an option. The *South Western Region Rail Parking Study* was spearheaded by concerns that a lack of parking availability at rail stations forced those otherwise amenable to using rail to drive to their destination. SWRPA’s participates on the technical committees of the *Danbury Branch Line Study*, the *New Canaan/Waterbury Branch Line Study*, and the *Stamford LRT Study*. The *Long Island Sound Waterborne Transportation Plan (2005)*, in coordination with the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency and the New York Metropolitan Planning Council, addressed options for introducing regular commuter services between Stamford, Bridgeport and New York City.

In 2007, SWRPA hosted a Transit Oriented Development Conference, featuring nationally recognized experts in the field from the public and private sector. This conference brought attention to the benefits of TOD, and panelists provided real-world examples of TOD that could be applied locally. SWRPA’s attention to transit oriented development is as much a function of its promotion of the environmental advantages to compact development with walkability and access to transit as it is our interest in economic development.

Activities in which SWRPA sponsored or actively participated in provides an indication of the importance of land use planning that provides environmental advantages, such as the South Norwalk Rail Station Intermodal Study, the *Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan* and the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency *Urban Connectivity Master Plan*. The Stamford Urban Transitway project incorporates automobile trip reduction and travel demand management strategies that promote alternative transportation modes,

The *South Western Region Bike/Pedestrian Plan* is identifying policies and activities that increase the use, safety, and convenience of bicycling and walking in Connecticut’s South Western Region and to promote bicycling and walking as integral components of the Region’s multi-modal transportation system. Future study products include technical memoranda recommending a regional on-street network as well as policies to make the region more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

SWRPA has made a concerted effort to enhance the integration and connectivity of transportation systems and modes for people and freight. The region is supportive of transportation investments that encourage development of a balanced transportation system which uses a variety of modes operating in a

complementary way to save energy, reduce congestion, strengthen urban centers and meet the needs of all residents. The Plan proposes continuation and expansion of rail and commuter connections and services, more direct and seamless transit services, and future studies of freight alternatives that link Connecticut to the Port of New York/New Jersey and the international rail grid.

SWRPA has devoted substantial amounts of time and energy in promoting connectivity in recent years through its activities. The *Greenwich/Norwalk Bus Rapid Transit Study* recommends enhanced bus service to complement existing local bus routes and connect with the Stamford's Intermodal Transportation Center. The *Coastal Corridor Bus Study* includes connectivity as a key consideration in its scope of work and includes analysis of a more regional manner for those unable to use rail.

Member municipalities of SWRPA have closely coordinated with SWRPA on many projects enhancing transportation integration and connectivity, resulting in their inclusion on the Transportation Improvement Program. Stamford has been working towards completion of its LRT feasibility, which looks to develop light rail as a more effective mode to connect the Stamford Transportation Center with its downtown area and Bulls Head neighborhood. The *Stamford Transportation Center Master Plan* concentrates on improved integration of employer commuter shuttles within the terminal, and its connection to the rail platforms and the bus bays; the *South Norwalk Rail Station Intermodal Study* dealt with the same types of issues. Stamford has also been made substantial progress on the construction of its urban transitway, which will provide a single point of access to local and regional bus service, commuter rail, Amtrak and proposed ferry services within downtown Stamford, and includes sidewalks and a dedicated bicycle lane, along with bus and road improvements

SWRPA has also joined forces with the Westchester County Department of Planning to study access to employment centers and disconnected residential areas along the I-95, I-287 and Merritt Parkway Corridors. This joint project provides remediation recommendations that could improve interstate connectivity and provide opportunities for additional attainable housing within a reasonable distance from workplaces.

As the lead agency in the coordination of the Bridgeport/Stamford Urbanized Area's FTA recipients of Section 5307 Enhancement funds, SWRPA has worked closely with municipalities and transit providers to enhance connectivity through upgrades to transit facilities, such as installation of bike racks and bus shelters. Additionally, FTA enhancement funding will be used to assist the City of Norwalk with the development of a multi-use trail along the Norwalk River, which is expected to complement and increase transit use due to its close proximity to the office, commercial and retail developments and promote commuting by bicycle and on foot.

7. Promote efficient system management and operation.

The South Western Region's transportation planning program promotes and supports *transportation systems management* (TSM) to maximize the efficiency and productivity of the Region's existing transportation system. The Plan also identifies projects and studies aimed at prolonging the effective life of facilities, using new technology to achieve transportation system productivity and service enhancement, and refining operations, management, financing and governance to improve system efficiency.

An example of the Region's support of TSM is the South Western Region Incident Management Team, which brings together local, regional and state agencies and organizations involved in responding to incidents on the regional highway, transit and water transportation systems. Meetings and training

exercises of the South Western Region Incident Management Team improve coordination between response agencies, thereby improving system safety and operational efficiency. Since 1991 – when the Region began supporting the South Western Region Incident Management Team – it has helped to develop plans and programs to address system deficiencies, leading to quicker emergency response, decreased delay and less non-recurrent congestion.

In addition, the Region makes use of the various management systems developed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation as part of the planning process. A regional pavement management system and a geographic information system have been developed and implemented to assist in system management decisions. SWRPA is also working with ConnDOT on pilot testing of the Structure Inventory System for the South Western Region.

The *South Western Region ITS Strategic Plan* performed a strategic assessment of new and enhanced opportunities for the implementation of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) applications in the South Western Region of Connecticut encompass a broad range of technologies. As part of SWRPA's commitment to multi-modal transportation, four strategies aim to improve expressway and arterial management were identified, along with transit management strategies to help to meet the growing transit needs of the Region and its transit operators.

The corridor studies that SWRPA has commenced each contain system management and operation as underlying objectives. The *Route 7 Transportation and Land Use Study* contains a task devoted to access management, while the broader goals of the *Route 7 Study*, the *Darien Route 1 Study*, and the *Greenwich/Stamford Route 1 Study* each revolve around improving traffic flow, improving safety, addressing access management and accommodating multimodal operations. The *South Western Region Rail Parking Study* addresses operational deficiencies at rail stations across the region, and the *Westport/Greens Farms Rail Parking Study* will address these issues head-on.

8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

A prime objective of the South Western Region is maintaining a state of good repair for transportation equipment and facilities, including highways, bridges, and transit systems. The Plan identifies the maintenance needs and resources to maintain the Region's transportation systems. Over the twenty-nine year span of the Plan, over \$783 million will be spent on system preservation and maintenance for projects such as paving, bridge repair or replacement and other forms of reconstruction in place. This equates to \$27 million per year for system preservation and maintenance.

The *Transportation Improvement Program* is largely comprised of projects focusing on system preservation, and SWRPA works closely with its Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) and the Members of the South Western Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (SWRMPO) to continuously amend the TIP to address pressing needs. Implementation of projects to attain and maintain a state of good repair for rail infrastructure bus systems, including infrastructure, ITS and rolling stock, are among the region's highest priorities for funding. The region continues to use and improve existing monitoring, management and evaluation systems of the towns, state and region to develop maintenance and paving programs and priorities to maximize pavement condition and longevity.

Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) is considered in all activities and incorporated into the long range transportation plan in accordance with all federal regulations and guidance. Objectives include development of processes and strategies for capital and operational improvements to preserve the existing highway and transit systems. The South Western Region Incident

Management Task Force and The Locally Coordinated Human Service Transportation (LOCHSTP) planning efforts, and rail parking initiatives are examples of TSMO.

The South Western Region Purchasing Cooperative is comprised of municipal purchasing staff and the SWRPA staff, and has resulted in the purchase of items that assist in system preservation, including gasoline, diesel oil, salt, and sand.

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